

Carmen Urcle Flanagan

By Thelma Flanagan from her "Treasures"

One day we children were playing on the farm close to one of the tenant's houses. The black woman yelled, "Do you children like pumpkin pie?" One of my sisters, Carmen, who was always spokesman any where, any time, said, "Yes ma'm." Then she turned to us saying, "Do we?" She was the leader, the mischief maker, many times when the rest of us didn't know what it was all about. She could sing like a woman Caruso and was a lift to any party.

Carmen died of tuberculosis. Quite a shock to the whole community. Immediately discovering her ailment, my parents sent her to a tuberculosis hospital where she was treated for over a year. Because she wrote home saying she wanted to come home to die, our father said, "She'll have what she wants," and built her the most beautiful two room house with a little porch right off from the front yard to the left as you entered our country home yard.

It was painted solid white inside and outside, nine windows, double glass doors in between the bedroom and fireside room with two windows and glass door with a tiny little porch covered with a flowering summer vine. It was such an attractive little home right close to the big family house.

For the first few months home, she revived immensely then the sad time came. She died with me helping her sit up. Her last words were, "Raise me up." She just went to sleep dying just that easily. When I told my mother, "Carmen just died", Mother said, "Oh, I wanted to hear her say, 'Mama' one more time!" We were heartbroken.

She was a beautiful character and she said she didn't mind dying. That was very consoling to all of us. She lacked a few days being (sic) twenty-five years old. She was quite popular and a lot of fun plus inspirational to anyone who knew her. Therefore her funeral was big.

I was glad I was with her instead of my mother who was grief stricken and tired. On her tomb was written, "Asleep in Jesus" or something to that effect. That was years ago but I remember those sad moments.

Ed. Note: Records indicate Carmen was born in Pitt County on July 18, 1891 and died May 5, 1910, shortly before her nineteenth birthday. Her parents were Nannie Bathsheba Smith and John Hardy Flanagan. She was buried in the Archibald Flanagan family burial plot on the Chinquapin Road near Farmville where her parents and several other family members are buried.